

‘I Am Nature’: 26th Rohkunstbau Exhibition at Schloss Lieberose

by Vanessa Souli // July 9, 2021

On June 19th, the yearly rural art event Rohkunstbau opened its doors to the public at Schloss Lieberose in Spreewald with a series of installations, video works, sculptures and paintings under this year's umbrella theme 'I am Nature_On Vulnerability.Survival in a Society at Risk.' The concept of nature in relation to risk societies lays the foundation of the 26th edition of the art event, bringing together international artistic positions that cover the thematic sections: 'Models of Renewal,' 'Nature observations and cultural techniques,' 'The invisible spectre of fear,' 'The discomfort' and 'Invisible Radioactivity.' Through this spectrum of topics, the exhibition aims to examine our concepts of nature as well as the risk societies we have built for ourselves—societies on the verge of being brought down by their own advancements, and the dangers that these imply.

Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani: Installation view, Rohkunstbau 26, Regale, 600 Wasserflaschen Bad Liebenwerda *Wasserflaschen Leihgabe Getränke Gröschke // ©Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani, VG Bildkunst Bonn, 2021, Photo by Jan Brockhaus/Freunde des Rohkunstbau e.V.

This year, the topic of nature is set in a post-pandemic context. The focus lies on existential insecurities as well as wishes and hopes that come in the aftermath of the pandemic and how our relationship to nature should or might have changed. To what extent is humanity still nature? And how can we tell the difference between natural and man-made? Nature is once again the invisible opponent. And while all pandemics and natural catastrophes have their root in human intervention, we still project our worries and frustrations on nature: the invisible, impermeable and fearsome “exterior.”

Entering the raw spaces of the Lieberose Castle, we are first confronted with the work of Nina Fischer & Maroan el Sani ‘Spirits closing their eyes’ (2012), a three-channel video projection narrating the experiences of Japanese people after the Fukushima atomic disaster, accompanied by a big shelf where 600 water bottles are meticulously arranged. The bottles represent the prototypes of researchers who are developing cheap radiation gauges made from recycled plastic bottles, affordable to everyone. With this makeshift form of protection, the installation brings to the fore the fears and solutions that accompany natural disasters.



Claudia Chaseling: 'deluge of delusion 2,'2021;'end of story 2,'2020;'muddy waters 1,'2020,installation view Rohkunstbau26 //©Claudia Chaseling,VG Bildkunst Bonn,2021,Photo by Jan Brockhaus/Freunde des Rohkunstbau e.V.

Claudia Chaseling has also been working on the issue of the invisible radioactivity and atomic energy for most of her career. Although she is a researcher of invisible particles of energy, her visual language is paradoxically colorful, imposing and room-encompassing. In the work 'blind spots' (2021), she has conceived a room with three ovoid shapes and aluminium splatters all over the floor and walls. Engaging her unique concept of 'spatial paintings', Chaseling investigates in this work the mutation of sea life due to radioactive contamination, while creating immersive installations that function like activist manifestos.

A more participatory approach is introduced with Yoko Ono's work 'Wish Tree' (since 1991) where she invites visitors to write down a wish and hang it on the tree branches. All wishes will then be buried in Imagine Peace Tower in Reykjavik. In an ironic juxtaposition to the serene trees, Laure Prouvost's video work 'metal man—where do we go' (2019), shows unrecognisable wiggly scenes of beaches and relaxing landscapes in a small vertical screen that almost has the opposite effect from what it aims to cause; a sense of nausea and disorientation—a characteristic feeling of today's risk society.



Yoko Ono: "Wish Tree," (1996) 2021, Weißdorn, Hängeetiketten, Installation view Rohkunstbau 26, Schloss Lieberose // Photo Artpress, 2021

The Rohkunstbau exhibition amounts to a fruitful discussion about the Anthropocene and the quest for a new democracy that allows to “live and let live.” Through the work of over 20 artists, the show engages with the ways in which our perceptions of nature have changed in a post-pandemic world, and how we will move forward in a phase of uncertainty.

Exhibition Info

Rohkunstbau 2021

Group Show: ‘Ich bin Natur_Von der Verletzlichkeit. Überleben in der Risikogesellschaft

Exhibition: June 19–Oct. 3, 2021

[rohrkunstbau.net](https://www.rohkunstbau.net/) (<https://www.rohkunstbau.net/>)

Schloss Lieberose, Schlosshof 3, 15868 Lieberose